

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims below will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original): An improved cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, wherein at least one of the walls has a top edge, the system having a flexible cover material with dimensions approximately the same as the dimensions of the open top and an upwardly facing and a downwardly facing surface, a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of at least one side edge of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material, and a rail capable of being mounted adjacent the edge of the wall and having an outwardly facing portion defining an elongated channel portion, wherein the improvement comprises:

an elongated, substantially rigid second fastening means having an integrally formed fastening surface positioned to engage the first fastening means, the second fastening means being dimensioned to be capable of longitudinal slideable engagement with the channel and also dimensioned to be incapable of lateral movement from the channel,

wherein the second fastening means is prevented from longitudinal escape from the channel.

Claim 2 (original): The cover system of claim 1 wherein two of the side walls have top edges and two of the side edges of the cover material have downwardly facing fastening means, and further comprising a second rail, wherein the two rails are capable of being mounted on the two top edges.

Claim 3 (original): The cover system of claim 1 wherein the first fastening means and the fastening surface of the second fastening means are selected from the group consisting of loop bearing material and hook bearing material.

Claim 4 (original): The cover system of claim 2 wherein the rails are made of materials selected from the group consisting of extruded aluminum and plastic.

Claim 5 (original): The cover system of claim 2 wherein the side rails further comprise a mounting flange.

Claim 6 (original): The cover system of claim 2 wherein the side rails are secured to the top edges by means selected from the group consisting of bolts, rivets, screws, and C- clamps.

Claim 7 (original): The cover system of claim 1 wherein the channel is substantially vertical.

Claim 8 (original): The cover system of claim 1 wherein the channel is configured in an inclined orientation.

Claim 9 (currently amended): An improved cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, wherein at least one of the walls has a top edge, the system having a flexible cover material with dimensions approximately the same as the dimensions of the open top and an upwardly facing and a downwardly facing surface, a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of at least one side edge of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material, and a rail capable of being mounted adjacent the edge of the wall and having an outwardly facing portion defining an elongated channel portion, wherein the improvement comprises:

an elongated, substantially rigid second fastening means having an integrally formed fastening surface positioned to engage the first fastening means, the second fastening means being dimensioned to be capable of longitudinal slideable engagement with the channel and also dimensioned to be incapable of lateral movement from the channel. ~~The cover system of claim 1~~

wherein the second fastening means is prevented from longitudinal escape from the channel by a rivet.

Claim 10 (currently amended): In a method of making a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the system comprising a flexible cover having dimensions approximately the same as the open top, the flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface and a downwardly facing surface, the flexible cover material having strips of first fastening material disposed along at least a portion of two side edges of the downwardly facing surface, the open top container having strips of a second fastening material integrally formed with an elongated slat mounted on a side rail substantially at a top edge of a wall of the container or truck box, the first fastening material and the second fastening material being reversibly engageable with one another to fasten the cover to the open top, the improved method of manufacture comprising:

first, slideably introducing the second fastening material-means into the side rail and extending along the longitudinal axis of the side rail; and,

second, preventing slideable escape of the second fastening material-means from the rail.

Claim 11 (currently amended): In a method of making a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the system comprising a flexible cover having dimensions approximately the same as the open top, the flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface and a downwardly facing surface, the flexible cover material having strips of first fastening material disposed along at least a portion of two side edges of the downwardly facing surface, the open top container having strips of a second fastening material integrally formed with an elongated slat mounted on a side rail substantially at a top edge of a wall of the container or truck box, the first fastening material and the second fastening material being reversibly engageable with one another to fasten the cover to the open top, the improved method of manufacture comprising:

first, slideably introducing the second fastening material into the side rail and extending along the longitudinal axis of the side rail; and,

second, preventing slideable escape of the second fastening material from the rail, ~~The method of claim 10~~ wherein the slideable escape is blocked by riveting the second fastening material means to the side rail.

Claim 12 (currently amended): In a method of making a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the system comprising a flexible cover having dimensions approximately the same as the open top, the flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface and a downwardly facing surface, the flexible cover material having strips of first fastening material disposed along at least a portion of two side edges of the downwardly facing surface, the open top container having strips of a second fastening material integrally formed with an elongated slat mounted on a side rail substantially at a top edge of a wall of the container or truck box, the first fastening material and the second fastening material being reversibly engageable with one another to fasten the cover to the open top, the improved method of manufacture comprising:

first, slideably introducing the second fastening material into the side rail and extending along the longitudinal axis of the side rail; and,

second, preventing slideable escape of the second fastening material from the rail, ~~The method of claim 11~~ wherein the slideable escape is prevented by a blocking member attached to the side of the rail, said blocking member projecting into a slot formed in the elongated slat.

Claim 13 (original): A cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, the system comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of one of the side walls and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface, a downwardly facing surface, a front edge, a rear edge and two side edges;

a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of one of the side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;

an elongated slat mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the slat having a fastening surface exposed through the channel, wherein the fastening surface of the slat is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means;

at least one stop attached to the rail limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally.

Claim 14 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the length of the slat is shorter than the channel and the at least one stop limits the longitudinal movement of the slat so that the ends of the slat do not exit the channel.

Claim 15 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail comprises a pair of end caps detachably attached to opposing ends of the side rail.

Claim 16 (previously presented): A cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, the system comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of one of the side walls and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface, a downwardly facing surface, a front edge, a rear edge and two side edges;

a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of one of the side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;

an elongated slat mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the slat having a fastening surface exposed through the channel, wherein the fastening surface of the slat is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means, and the slat further includes an elongated slot formed through said slat; and

at least one stop attached to the rail limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally, and wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail is configured to at least partially extend into the slot.

Claim 17 (original): A cover system according to claim 16, wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail comprises a roll pin removably inserted into a mating hole dimensioned to provide an interference fit to the roll pin and formed in the side rail.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, the system comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of one of the side walls and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface, a downwardly facing surface, a front edge, a rear edge and two side edges;

a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of one of the side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;

an elongated slat mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the slat having a fastening surface exposed through the channel, wherein the fastening surface of the slat is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means, the length of the slat is shorter than the channel, and the slat further includes an elongated slot formed through said slat; and

at least one stop attached to the rail limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally wherein the at least one stop limits the longitudinal movement of the slat so that the ends of the slat do not exit the channel, and wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail is configured to at least partially extend into the slot.

Claim 19 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the first fastening means comprises strip of loop-bearing material permanently affixed to the flexible cover material, and wherein the fastening surface of the slat comprises a strip of hook-bearing material permanently affixed to the slat.

Claim 20 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the first fastening means comprises a strip of hook-bearing material permanently affixed to the flexible cover material, and wherein the fastening surface of the slat comprises a strip of loop bearing material permanently affixed to the slat.

Claim 21 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the side rail is extruded aluminum.

Claim 22 (original): A cover system according to claim 21, wherein the channel defined in the side rails is outwardly facing when the side rail is mounted to the side wall.

Claim 23 (original): A cover system according to claim 22, wherein the channel is inclined.

Claim 24 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the side rail further comprises a mounting flange.

Claim 25 (original): A cover system according to claim 24, wherein the mounting flange of the side rail is configured to be secured to the side wall by clamps.

Claim 26 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the at least one stop is detachable from the rail.

Claim 27 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, further comprising a plurality of elongated slats mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, and wherein the at least one stop limits the range the slats can slide within the channel.

Claim 28 (canceled): A cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, the system comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of one of the side walls and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface, a downwardly facing surface, a front edge, a rear edge and two side edges;

a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of one of the side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;

a plurality of elongated slats mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the slats each having a fastening surface exposed through the channel, wherein the fastening surface of each slat is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means, and wherein the elongated slats are connected by an elastomeric material; and

at least one stop attached to the rail limiting the range the slats can slide longitudinally within the channel.

Claim 29 (original): A cover system according to claim 13, further comprising:

a second side rail capable of being mounted adjacent the other side wall and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a second slat mounted within the channel defined in the second side rail to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the second slat having a fastening surface exposed through the channel defined in the second side rail, wherein the fastening surface of the second slat is capable of

reversible attachment to the first fastening means and the first fastening means is disposed along at least a portion of both side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;
and

at least one stop attached to the second side rail limiting the range the second slat can slide longitudinally.

Claim 30 (original): A cover system according to claim 29, wherein the length of the first and second slats are shorter than the channels defined in the first and second side rails, respectively, and wherein the at least one stop attached to the first side rail and the at least one stop attached to the second side rail limits the longitudinal movement of the first and second slats so that the ends of the slats do not exit the channels.

Claim 31 (original): A rail assembly for use in a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the rail assembly comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of a side wall of the open top container or truck box and having a longitudinal channel defined therein;

an elongated slat slideably contained within the channel, the slat being shorter than the channel and having a fastening surface exposed through the channel.

Claim 32 (original): A rail assembly for use in a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the rail assembly comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of a side wall of the open top container or truck box and having a longitudinal channel defined therein;

an elongated slat mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the slat having a fastening surface exposed through the channel;

at least one stop limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally.

Claim 33 (original): A cover system according to claim 32, wherein the slat is shorter than the channel.

Claim 34 (currently amended): A cover system according to claim 32, wherein the slat is shorter than the channel and wherein the at least one stop limits the longitudinal sliding movement of the slat so that the ends of the slat are prevented from exiting the channel.